

Courier

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Police collect toys for county children

Rolling thunder in a red hat and beard! That's what came up the roadway to the Government Center on Wednesday, Dec. 15, when a multitude of Fairfax County Police motorcycles, headed by

Santa on a Harley Davidson, arrived to receive the toys collected for underprivileged children in Fairfax County. Police Santa, looking sharp in beard, riding boots and helmet, was aided by his policemen elves as they greeted

children from the county day care center. Santa, elves and an oversized Rudolph and Frosty, passed out candy canes and posed for pictures with the wide-eyed children.

This is the 16th year
See Santa, page 2



Police Santa and Mrs. Claus greeted children at the Fairfax County Government Center.

Holiday memories

Holidays are for memories – reliving them and making new ones. In this issue, six county employees share some of their holiday memories, drawing from childhood experiences to overseas adventures. Why not take just a moment this holiday season to share your recollections with others near you.

Go to page 4 and enjoy.

Courier wishes

Courier thanks you for your support this year and wishes you a wonderful holiday season.

Your story ideas and suggestions are always welcome and help make *Courier* a useful and informative publication for county employees.

Happy Holidays! - JN

Santa, from page 1**Santa's thunder!**

for the Santa's Ride toy collection. The program began in 1988 as a campaign to benefit the sick and needy children at Inova

filling a 25-foot trailer with more than 70 bicycles, helmets and toys collected by local attorneys.

As in past years, Anita Vines, county printing office, has coordinated the toy



Fairfax Hospital. During the years, the project

collection project for the Government Center, Pennino and Herrity Buildings. More

**Waiting for Santa.**

grew to include the efforts of Fairfax County Police Motorcycle Squad, Office of the Sheriff, police departments of the Town of Vienna and the City of Fairfax, and Virginia State Police.

**Police elves.**

than 10 huge boxes of toys, books and stuffed animals were collected from these locations and picked up by the police.

"Those who made donations can be pleased knowing that they will make some children happy

this holiday season," said Vines, giving a special accolade to Pennino Building helpers

Nancy Lober and Fran Brerkery and the Department of Family Services which contributed more than 50 stuffed teddy bears. ■

Chairman Connolly gives collected toys to Anita Vines.



The response from county employees, community organizations and citizens has been so overwhelming that the results of the holiday project now benefit underprivileged children throughout Fairfax County. According to Fairfax County Police project coordinator, Scott Bates, collected items are distributed to the children's ward at Fairfax Hospital, the Hispanic Community Center and the Ronald McDonald House in Fairfax. As an example of resident's generosity, Bates told of being called to pick up some items and then

**The Grinch didn't steal this Christmas!**

Fire safety tips for the holiday season

Not only is this the season for holiday cheer, but also the worst season for fires. More people are decorating with candles, trees and lights, using fireplaces, and overloading electrical outlets – all leading causes of fires at this time of year.

There are still a lot of holidays left this season, so here are some fire safety tips to keep in mind:

- ♦ Water your tree regularly to keep it fresh and place it away from heat to prevent it from drying out.
- ♦ Unplug tree lights at night and when leaving the home.
- ♦ Do not use the fireplace for disposing wrapping paper, boxes, or your tree.
- ♦ Do not decorate trees with real candles. If using candles in your home, place them in glass or ceramic containers on level surfaces. Never leave them unattended.
- ♦ Do not overload electrical outlets.
- ♦ Keep an eye on friends and family members who smoke to be sure ashes don't fall on

furniture, gifts or wrapping paper, and don't empty ashtrays into the trash.

- ♦ Make sure your smoke alarm and fire extinguisher work.

With the recent numbers of house fires in the area, you should be particularly aware of exits in your home. Fairfax County has enacted a new residential building code that requires all basements finished after Oct. 1, 2004, to have a door or window to the outside. If plans for finishing a basement do not include one, an outside exit must be provided by cutting a new opening into an existing foundation wall and constructing a window well or areaway. This will save lives during fire emergencies when the main means of exit from a basement cannot be used.

For more information or to request a speaker on fire safety or changes to the building codes, contact the Office of Public Affairs at 703-324-3187, TTY 703-324-2935.

And have a happy – safe – holiday! ■

Fire safety information can be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency

Weather-related government closings or delays

For information on weather-related county government closings or delays, employees should remember to call the county's snow (and inclement weather) line: 703-246-SNOW (7669).

Information on county government closings and delays will also be available on cable Channel 16, the county Web site, www.fairfaxcounty.gov, on the emergency information line: 703-817-7771, TTY 711 and by monitoring local radio and television stations.

Employees should also update their profile on the county's Emergency Alert Network (<http://ean.fairfaxcounty.gov/>) since closing information will also be available via this system. Alerts, notifications and updates can be sent to any or all of your technology devices, including any e-mail account, work or home; cell phone (text message costs may apply); pager and PDA.

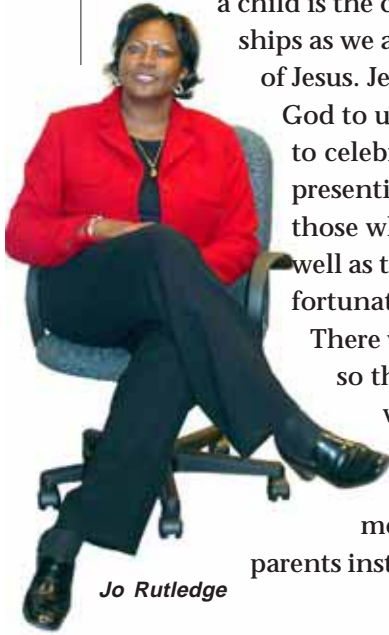
Also on the EAN, you can sign up for either normal business hours emergency weather alerts (M - F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or 24/7 emergency weather alerts. These weather updates are sent automatically through the EAN by the National Weather Service anytime an alert is sent to NOAA weather radios, so you will be up-to-date with the most timely weather information.

If you have any questions regarding the EAN, help is available online at <http://ean.fairfaxcounty.gov/faq.php>. You may also contact your designated agency point of contact, or send an e-mail to ean.support@fairfaxcounty.gov.

For more information on employee notification during weather-related emergencies, visit the Office of Public Affairs Infoweb page at http://infoweb/opa/guide_for_agencies.htm, or call OPA at 703-324-3187, TTY 703-324-2935. ■

update your profile on the county's EAN at <http://ean.fairfaxcounty.gov/>

Holiday Memories



Jo Rutledge

What I remember most about Christmas as a child is the close family relationships as we all celebrated the birth of Jesus. Jesus was a gift from God to us, so what better way to celebrate his birth than by presenting gifts to others, to those who are dear to us as well as those who are less fortunate.

There were 11 in our family so the holidays when I was growing up in Alabama were always full of fun, excitement and caring. Our parents instilled in us the respect

for others less fortunate and we would always take food baskets to some of the senior citizens living in our neighborhood. After we exchanged our gifts on Christmas, aunts and uncles and cousins came to our house for dinner, mainly because my mother was the best cook!

And what memories those times hold. My family is more spread out now but we still get together to talk about those great times and make new traditions for our expanded families. Some people are now memories for us, and we pass those warm reminiscences on to the growing number of nieces and nephews.

The holidays are good.

- Jo Rutledge, Child Protective Services

My parents were both orphaned at young ages, and thus grew up without the tradition of large family gatherings. When they married and had children they created a "family" of aunts and uncles from a large group of loving friends and established traditions that my sister and I enjoy carrying on. My mother was a wonderful cook and although we were not Swedish, every year she made a delicious Swedish braided Christmas bread. She had been taught the recipe by a school friend. Mom would start baking early on the Christmas Eve to make about 25 loaves. Christmas Eve at our house smelled so wonderful. By mid-afternoon, we would all pile into the car and deliver the bread to friends all over town - visiting until it was time to go to church at midnight. Our friends were Italian, French, Spanish or English and we shared their traditional Christmas food and their customs, and continue to do so today.

- Sheila Coffin, Judicial Center



Sheila Coffin

During the eight nights of Hanukkah, we say blessings over the candles each night, sing songs, and sometimes play the dreidel game. We also celebrate Hanukkah with other families at our temple. We bring menorahs from home, and we all light our candles together.

And although it's not part of our Hanukkah celebration, the members of our temple are collect-

ing pre-paid calling cards right now to send to soldiers in Iraq.

A lot of the members of our temple are

actually interfaith couples who celebrate both Christmas and Hanukkah. Even though our children were raised in the Jewish faith, when they were small we had both a Christmas tree and a menorah. They felt it was the best of all worlds. And it was!

Sometimes, this holiday season may be difficult for anyone who doesn't understand the celebration of Christmas and Hanukkah. County employees should be aware that there are a lot of people from other cultures here and help them appreciate the spirit of the season.

Happy holidays to all!

- Amy Brown, Fairfax County Public Library



Amy Brown

Every Christmas my nativity scene from Spain reminds me of the wonderful holiday traditions we observed at our first U.S. embassy assignment in 1980-82.

Madrid's homes and churches displayed elaborate nativity scenes constructed with crèche figures of every imaginable size. I got my beautiful seven-piece set there.

On Christmas Eve, while Americans awaited



Debbie King

Santa Claus, Spanish families gathered around these home nativity scenes to feast on holiday treats. The Spanish children receive their gifts on Jan. 6, the Feast of Epiphany.

In Spain, the Three Kings are revered, and

their journey to Bethlehem is reenacted. Their arrival in Madrid is celebrated in the most wondrous parade I have ever seen, decorated with a multitude of lights as the Magi arrive on camels. Of the few things our son remembers about Madrid, that parade is one of them.

Participating in these cultural traditions left us with memories we treasure.

- Debbie King, Fairfax County Public Library

She was the most beautiful child I'd ever seen. Well, actually she was more like a teenager, but that look of wonder in her eyes made her look younger.

Once again I was caroling at Petito's Café on Connecticut Avenue. Each night we'd raise money for a different charity and I'd lost track of what charity we were singing for—it had been a hard grind this time. It was cold, which made the mere act of standing up and holding sheet music an ordeal. There was a lot of bickering. Two volunteer choir directors were continually at each other's throats. The flute wouldn't stay in tune. The guitar never came close to it.

We were grumpy and demoralized, but that all changed when the charity brought in some kids for a complimentary meal and a chance to join in the singing. We were joined by an enthusiastic group of young girls, one who was radiant; a beautiful African-American teen-ager with big lovely eyes. She listened to our off-key warblings with a look of pure joy on her face. Soon we were all singing just for her and we were starting to sound halfway decent.

All too soon it was time for them to go. After they left, I asked a fellow caroler where the kids had come from and she said, "St. Ann's. It's a home for unwed mothers."

- Liz Milner, Reston Community Center



Liz Milner

Our family is really enjoying Christmas this year. Although the children haven't yet figured out Christmas, they are fascinated with the excitement of the lights and the spirit of the season. As parents, we are proud of them and thankful that the four of them don't yank on the Christmas tree – they just pet it.

We have this four-foot snowman at the base of our Christmas tree and little Mike climbs on him and sticks his carrot nose in his mouth, his idea of a kiss! The snowman may be raking up more kisses than mommy and daddy at this point – Hmmm. Alexandra and Maria point to the string of Elmo Christmas lights and say, "Baby." Then there is Christopher, our last to learn how to walk and the excitement of accomplishment as he staggers his way to the Christmas tree in awe of the lights make us remember to appreciate the small things in life that we take for granted. We are not sure what Christmas morning will bring but we do know it will be a true celebration of life and love – and activity – in the Grinnan house! Merry Christmas to all!

- Mike and Sophia Grinnen, Fairfax County police officers



The Grinnen quadruplets.

DFS shows many staff cultures

Rosa Suau and Everludis Lopez (below) were key organizers of the event...



...that included a display staffed by Office for Children members Abeba Tzeggai and Michael Assihne (right).



It was music and good food and lots of fun on Dec. 10 when DFS celebrated its staff's diversity. Sponsored by the Hispanic Latino Ambassadors, a DFS internal interest group, the event brought together more than a dozen ethnic exhibits in the Pennino Building, most with samples of native foods, where a steady stream of people came to enjoy learning more about various cultures. Pointing out all the exhibitors representing countries and cultures of DFS employees, Rosa Suau, DFS' Foster Care & Adoption, said, "This is a way we can all better understand each other. There are quite a few minorities represented in DFS and in the county and we want to help promote understanding in our workplace."

Everludis Lopez, one of the organizers, said the event was specifically planned for the holidays... "so we can all celebrate our diverse backgrounds during this time of joy." From the comments of the people visiting the exhibits, trying new foods and learning something new about their fellow workers' backgrounds, it was definitely a success. ■

Holiday wrappers!

Tucked away in a conference room on the 7th floor of the Pennino Building, volunteers wrapped more than 130 gifts for more than 60 clients of the Area Agency on Aging as part of its annual holiday project. Pictured (left to right) are Betsy Pugin, Roseann Tergis, Kathy Wilson and Carolyn Carter, all from the Area Agency of Aging. ■



Members of DHR sorted the food donations. Left to right: Traci Vaughan, Milly Mundy, Patty Shelton, Sylvia Mainville and Charlene Krohn.



Annual food drive brings in the goods

Five large vehicles that were packed with food, personal hygiene and cleaning items made their delivery to the FISH Food Pantry on Dec. 10.

Traci Vaughan, DHR and food drive coordinator said, "Thanks to all county employees who participated in this year's food drive, either by contributing food or other cleaning and personal hygiene items, packing donations, loading and unloading vehicles, and/or transporting food donations.

Thanks for all those in the many agencies who brought their donations to our office over the past weeks. A very special thank you to the Department of Tax Administration which goes all out on this project each year and filled our lobby with their donations this year! As usual, our thanks to Guest Services for letting us place a collection box and promotional materials in the cafeteria.

FISH. Inc. (Friendly, Instant, Sympathetic Help) is a multi-denominational outreach program serving people in the greater Fairfax area who are in need of emergency help for immediate needs. Families turn to FISH volunteers for help with food, clothing, transportation to medical appointments and assistance with rental/mortgage payments, utilities, prescriptions and gasoline. ■

Thank you

Fairfax County employees contributed more than \$190,000 to the 2004 Fairfax County Combined Charitable Campaign. This means you helped provide food for the homeless, day care for children and help for our senior citizens. To everyone who made a financial contribution, the campaign leadership team and I thank you for once again for making this effort a success. Just remember – your dollars weren't just spent, they helped someone in need. If you have any questions, please contact Margaret Savage, DHR, 703-324-3357, TTY 703-222-7314.

Police Officers Retirement System election results

First Lieutenant Erin Flaherty Schaible was selected as the Police Department representative on the Police Officers Retirement System Board of Trustees. Lt. Schaible was the only nominee in a recent nomination period, so no election was necessary. Her term of office will be from Jan. 1, 2005, until Dec. 31, 2008.

The Police Officers Retirement System is one of three county retirement systems responsible for general administration, managing millions of dollars of assets, and ensuring prompt and accurate payment of retirement benefits to county retirees.

Tuition Assistance Program

As of Dec. 12, all FY 2005 Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) funds have been reserved. Applications to be placed on the waiting list will be accepted. On June 30, 2005, any unclaimed funds will be reimbursed to employees on the TAP waiting list in the order reimbursement requests

are received. There currently are funds available for the Language Tuition Assistance Program (LTAP). Information about these programs is available online at <http://infoweb/HR>. Contact Sharon Hackett, DHR, at 703-324-3394, TTY 703-222-7314, with questions about these programs.

Interview training

Want to shine in your next interview? Get some tips at the "Interviewing for Employees" class offered by the Employment Division, DHR. This class will help employees improve their performance on job interviews. Sessions have been scheduled for Jan. 5, Feb. 9 and March 16, and will be held in the Government Center, Suite 170, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. To register, submit a training nomination form. Hurry though, space is limited and demand for this class has been heavy. Direct any questions or requests for special ADA accommodations to Sharon Hackett, DHR, at 703-324-3394, TTY 711.

Emergency Alert Network

Fairfax County provides emergency communications to employees through the Emergency Alert Network or EAN. The EAN is used to immediately contact you during a major crisis or emergency by delivering important emergency alerts, notifications and updates to you on any or all of your communications channels, such as e-mail account (work, home, other), cell phone, pager and PDA.

But you must log in to manage your account, or register to set up your account if you are a new county employee. The Infoweb address for the EAN is <http://ean.fairfaxcounty.gov/>. It is especially important for you to make sure to update your profile, including the building you currently work in. You will find answers to the most common support questions on our frequently asked questions page. If you need further support, you can also contact tech support via e-mail or use the Web-support form. ■

Health Department has winners!

The Fairfax County Health Department recently bestowed 30 individual and 19 team awards to department employees who excelled in "creativity, innovative ideas, problem-solving, customer service and leadership."

"We're extremely proud of our employees and their efforts to go the extra mile for our customers," said Ruth Felton, event co-chair. More than 100 people turned out for the ceremony. ■



One of the Health Department's winning teams is all smiles.

Millennium Forum

How the Outcome of the 2004 Election Will Impact Local Government

Jan. 12, 10:30 a.m.
Fairfax County
Government Center
Board Auditorium



Mara Liasson,
NPR correspondent

Create a shortcut to restart your PC (XP only)

Before heading home for the day, restart your PC and leave it at the Welcome to Windows – Press Ctrl-Alt-Delete screen. This is especially true on Thursdays. Here are the steps to create a quick desktop shortcut to Restart without having to click Start/Shut Down/Restart:

1. Right-click an area of the desktop;
2. Select New\Shortcut;
3. In the “Create Shortcut” Window, for the location of the shortcut, enter “shutdown r -t 01” (do not include quotes); press Next;
4. In the “Select a Title for Program” Window enter the name of the shortcut, such as “Restart PC.”

Tech Tip #88

Department of Information Technology
Technical Infrastructure Division
Technical Support Center (#167)
Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Pkwy.
Fairfax, VA 22035
Tel: 703-222-3535.#1
Fax: 703-222-3396
TTY 711

At the end of the day, double-click your shortcut icon and your PC will restart. No more Start/Shut Down/Restart.

Restarting your PC allows the PC to clean out memory and re-establish network connectivity and device configuration. Any time your PC seems to be acting strangely, network drives are missing, or other miscellaneous operations are occurring, close all open applications and restart your PC. A restart resolves the issue most of the time. ■

Did you know...

Gail Eskew was recently appointed director of the Fairfax County Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection.....Grace Starbird, director of the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, was recently elected president of the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging and secretary of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging.....Frank Dauphin, Guest Services cafeteria manager in the Government Center, placed third in a Guest Services contest where he won an Excellence Award among 2,500 cafeteria managers.....The Fairfax County Employee Recycling Committee was one of four programs in Virginia to be honored with a “spotlight” award for excellent programming from the Virginia Recycling Association.....Pat Taves, deputy county attorney, has been elected to a two-year term on the Board of Directors of the Local Government Attorneys of Virginia (LGA).....Joseph W. Blackwell Jr., acting director of the Personal Property and Business License Division of the Fairfax County Department of Tax Administration, recently received the 2004 Outstanding Deputy Commissioner Award from the Commissioners of the Revenue Association of Virginia at the its annual conference.....Angie Carrera, language access coordinator, served as moderator of the Northern Virginia Association of Volunteer Administrators (NVAVA) recent professional training program.....Hank Houde is a volunteer certified National Registry First Responder with the Loudoun County Volunteer Rescue Squad and is now a certified Swift Water Technician, Level 1.....The False Alarm Reduction Unit (FARU) of the Fairfax County Police Department has helped reduce the time officers spend answering false alarm calls from business and residential alarm systems. Supervisor Debra Olson and staffers William Boyle, Taranjeet Singh and Tu-Phuong Lam have cut the number of false alarm calls in half through their education and prevention campaigns. ■

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